

DISTRIBUTION OF TRAFFIC FLOW CRITERIA

ABSTRACT

Traffic flow criteria are distributed between routing devices. More specifically, a routing protocol, such as the Border Gateway Protocol (BGP), may be extended in a manner that allows fine-grain criteria to be conveyed for application to network traffic. For example, a flow specification data type may be defined in accordance with BGP to allow a variable number of packet flow attributes to be specified, such as source information, destination information, port information, protocol or other flow criteria. In this manner, traffic flow criteria are specified in a way that cannot be expressed using destination address prefixes only. The flow specification data type may be defined as network layer reachability information (NLRI) that is associated with a route advertised in accordance with BGP.